

Fort McPherson newcomers visit the Georgia Aquarium

Annette Fournier
Sentinel staff

Newcomers to Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem don't have to navigate relocation alone. The Relocation Readiness Program in Army Community Service (ACS) can help people get acquainted with the installations, the services and the city.

One of ACS's services is the Newcomers' tour,



Photos by Annette Fournier

Two-year-old Aubrey Graham gazes at a display at the Georgia Aquarium. She was visiting the aquarium with her grandfather, Larry Graham of Canton.

Visitors watch as a beluga whale swims by. Newcomers to Fort McPherson visited the aquarium May 18 with the Relocation and Readiness Program's newcomers tour.



when Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem personnel and their Families can tour some of the interesting spots in Atlanta and get an overview of the city from relocation guides.

Some newcomers plunged into Atlanta sightseeing May 18 with a visit to the Georgia Aquarium, Centennial Park and a crash course in riding the MARTA system.

Two-year-old Zacchaeus Davis seemed to enjoy the aquarium as he pulled his father through the exhibits yelling "Fish! Fish! Fish!" His father, retired Sgt. 1st Class Burlee Davis III, human resources assistant in the Directorate of Human Resources for the garrison, and his wife, Elizabeth, and sons went on the tour because it's a great opportunity to see the city and meet people, Davis said.

"This is a great way for people to get acclimated to the area and to get your family involved with what's happening at the installation," he said. "It's a great opportunity to meet people and take a moment away from your usual schedule. I'd definitely tell people they should check out the tours. My kids loved it, even the baby. And Zacchaeus loved taking the train."

ACS tries to have one newcomers' event monthly, said Kelly Walters, the relocation program manager with the Relocation Readiness Program.

"This is the best part of my job," Walters said, "because I meet so many new people and get to show them some great places in Atlanta."

The May 18 aquarium tour only reeled in a few

newcomers, but Walters said tours have been as many as 50 people.

Other trips have included the Atlanta High Museum of Art and Atlantic Station, and she's always looking for new sites to visit, she said. The tours are open to service-members, DoD Civilians and contractors, and they are encouraged to bring Family members.

For more information on the tours or other programs available for newcomers, call the ACS staff at 464-4070.



Retired Sgt. 1st Class Burlee Davis III, human resources assistant, Directorate of Human Resources for the garrison, points to sharks for his son Zacchaeus Davis, 2.



Georgia Aquarium
is breathtaking
journey to the deep

Annette Fournier
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The Georgia Aquarium in downtown Atlanta is a fun, family-focused opportunity to see amazing creatures from the deep.

The exhibits include sea creatures from around the world, from the depths of the oceans to the rivers and coast of Georgia.

The aquarium is divided into five types of underwater habitat; cold water, tropical, warm-water reef, freshwater and the coast of Georgia.

Some highlights include Coldwater Quest's Beluga whales, sea lions, penguins and a giant Pacific octopus, among others. The beluga whales are highly social mammals, and they can see through the glass of their tank, so "they're watching you as much as you're watching them," according to an aquarium employee.

In the Ocean Voyager gallery, visitors walk through a tunnel showing close views of a reef modeled on the Meso American Barrier Reef of Central America. Hammerhead sharks, whale sharks, giant groupers and swordfish are a few of the species in the 6 million-gallon salt-water tank. The tropical gallery features jellyfish, sea-horses, eels, sharks and neon-colored fish swimming around a coral reef.

In the River Scout gallery, visitors can see the world's largest freshwater fish sharing a tank with the arowana, a fish that can leap from the water to catch prey. A tunnel leads behind a tank filled with piranhas, where children or adults who don't mind crawling can see the carnivorous fish up close.

The aquarium has several touch pools where visitors can touch non-aggressive species of sting rays and sharks, and animals such as sea anenomes, starfish, horseshoe crabs and shrimp.

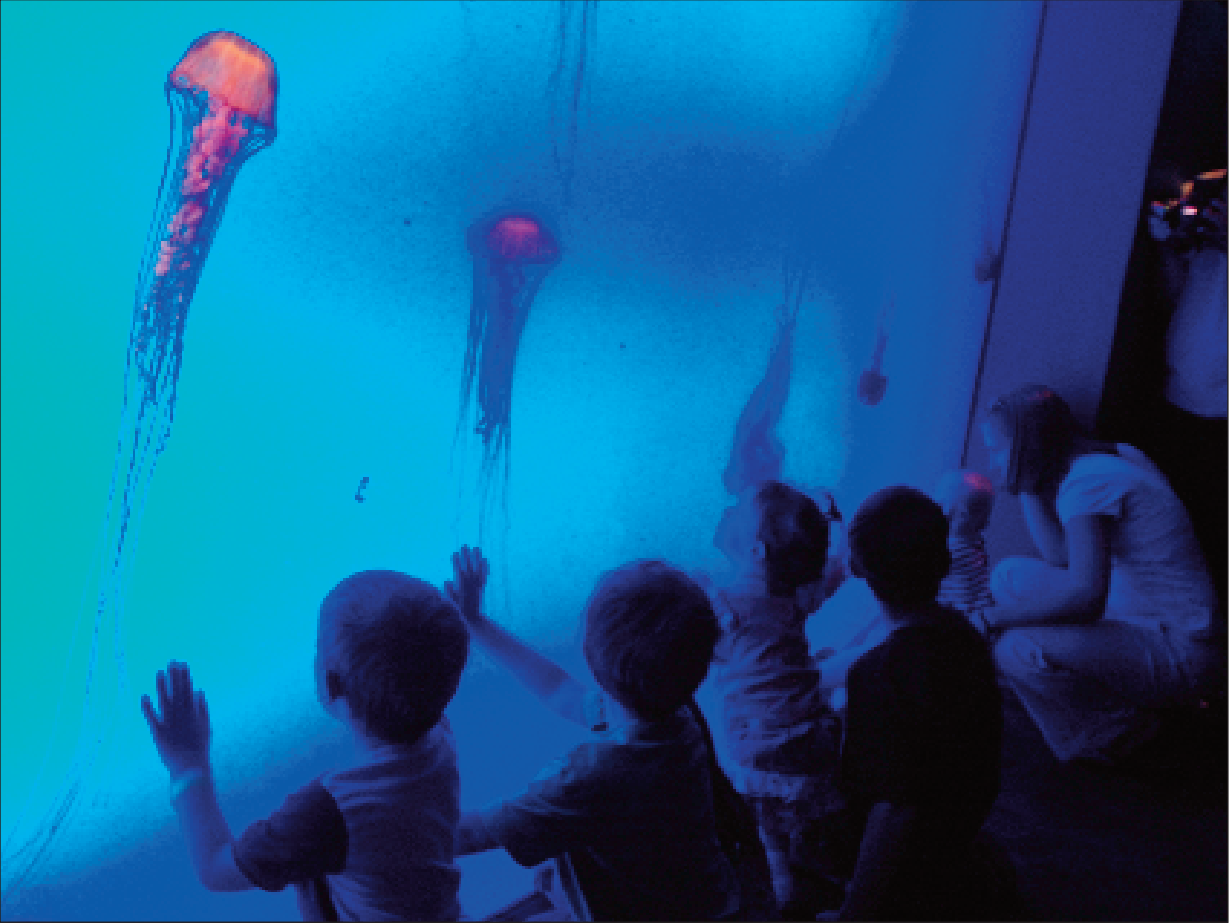
The aquarium is open Monday through Thurs-

day from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Friday through Sunday from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. It is located in downtown Atlanta across from Centennial Olympic Park.

Tickets cost \$24 for adults, \$18 for children 3 to 12 and \$20 for people 55 and older. Discounted

tickets can be purchased through the Leisure Activities Office for \$19.95 for adults, \$14.95 for children 3 to 12, and \$16.95 for people 55 and older.

For more information, call 404-581-4444 or visit www.mcpherson.army.mil/leisureactivities/leisure.htm.



Children watch jellyfish in one of the exhibits. The sea creatures at the aquarium come from oceans and waterways around the globe. The Georgia Aquarium has the most aquatic life of any aquarium, according to the aquarium's Web site.

FISHY FACTS

A shrimp's heart is in its head.

Jellyfish have no brain, blood or nervous system. Their bodies are 95 percent water.

Eels have two hearts.

The beluga whale is named for "belukha," the Russian word for white.

Arowana fish can leap more than 6 feet above the water to snatch insects and small birds out of the air.

Catfish have the most tastebuds of any animal.

Fish scales are used in most lipsticks.

Sea turtles navigate using the earth's magnetic field. They can grow to seven feet long and live to be nearly 200.

— information derived from www.stunning-stuff.com, the Georgia Aquarium Web site and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration